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TAGS: MARR PREL MCAP MOPS UN SU NO KPKO

SUBJECT: NORWAY READY TO SEND BOOTS TO DARFUR UNPKO

REF: SECSTATE 51778

Classified By: P/E Counselor Mike Hammer, reason 1.4 (b) and (d)

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel to MOD Operations Planning Chief Brigadier General Roar Sundseth and MFA DAS for Global Security Policy Siren Eriksen on April 3-4. Sundseth told us that Norway is prepared, when asked by the UN, to send one company (150 to 200 personnel) to support a blue helmet operation in Darfur. Sundseth said that Norway envisaged that these Norwegian Troops could be tailored to fulfill one of three types of mission: a quick reaction force, section commander protection, or a mine clearing unit. (Note. Sundseth cautioned, that if Norway would fulfill a mine clearing function, the number of troops would be smaller. End Note.) Sundseth indicated that this was as much as Norway could do militarily without drawing down its current commitments in Afghanistan. However, Sundseth said that, as with all UN Peace Keeping Operations (UNPKO), Norway believes that a commitment in Darfur will be long-term, and Norway is prepared to stay the course.

¶2. (C) Sundseth hoped that any Norwegian deployment would come as late in the year as possible to limit the strain on the 2006 budget, but that, despite budget concerns, Norway would be prepared to step up when needed. The MOD is weighing whether to request that the Norwegian Parliament pass a supplemental budget to support Norway's military contribution to Sudan.

¶3. (C) MFA DAS Eriksen confirmed that there is across the board support in the Norwegian government to support a UNPKO in Darfur, and that Norway would be prepared to contribute militarily when approached by the UN. Eriksen noted that Norway has been in close touch with the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO), which was well aware of Norwegian intentions to contribute. When asked if Norway had additional non-military resources to support a Darfur PKO, she said Norway would also consider contributing a small number of civilian police, if this was requested by the UN.

¶4. (C) On the heels of UN Special Envoy Jan Egeland's difficulties in traveling to Darfur this week, Eriksen said that Norway's main concern is whether the Government of Sudan will accept a UN presence in Darfur at all. It is hard to imagine any circumstances where a UNPKO could be introduced into Darfur against the wishes of the Sudanese government. She also wondered whether we had insights into Sudanese attitudes towards NATO, and whether these were different from Sudanese attitudes towards the UN, or if the Sudanese government had a general aversion to having Western troops on the ground.

¶5. (C) Comment: Sundseth's comments that Norway could not send more than a company of soldiers to Sudan without

negatively affecting Norwegian deployments elsewhere accurately reflects the limitations faced by Norway's small army. Also, Sudan (including Darfur) is already one of the largest recipients of Norwegian aid. If there are specific ways in which the UN can capitalize on Norway's willingness to contribute in Darfur, like civilian police, it may be worth the UN asking. Otherwise, we believe that there is very little scope for Norway to do more than it is already offering to do.

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